**Useful Tips for NSERC CREATE Letters of Intent**

# Choosing the right training program concept

* + The proposed CREATE **has to be different from existing ones**, including CREATE projects led by other universities. Potential applicants should check [the list of all active and completed CREATE projects](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Professors-Professeurs/Grants-Subs/CREATEResults-ResultatsFONCER_eng.asp) to avoid duplication (and to explain how yours is different):
	+ The main objective is “**value-added**” training, so you need to emphasize what your program would add to the training of the students beyond what they receive from existing graduate student programs. Of particular consideration are improved job readiness, collaborative/interdisciplinary training, increased student mobility (to other Canadian universities, companies, and other countries), mentoring, etc.
	+ The vast majority of successful applications include **mandatory internships or other immersive, ‘real-world’ experiences** for all participating graduate students.
	+ **Professional skills and soft skills training** is a “core required element” of any CREATE project, you must include explicit training (courses, workshops).
	+ Make a very convincing case that there is **demand/industry pull** for the kind of graduates your program will produce, e.g., using compelling statistics, support letters, or quotes from the industry.
	+ The focus should be on **training graduate students (at least 60%)**. PDFs and undergrad training needs may also be justified and supported.
	+ Training program must address significant scientific challenges
	+ The committee expects to see innovative pedagogy or **interestingly different methods of training**, e.g., immersive experiences.

# Putting together the right team

* The lead applicant (PI) must be from an NSERC-supported field at an NSERC-eligible university.
* Proposals can involve more than 1 university but don’t have to involve multiple universities.
* All universities who will be involved in the application must have at least one co-applicant listed in the proposal.
* Researchers can participate in a maximum of two CREATE grants and/or LOIs at the same time as either an applicant or co-applicant
* At least 70% of the group must be from NSE fields[[1]](#footnote-1). However, co-applicants at the interdisciplinary frontier between NSE, SSHRC, and CIHR may be included if, by combining the strengths of the various disciplines, a greater impact is achieved for the trainees.
* The committee expects applicant teams to be gender balanced and diverse.
* Collaborators (e.g., international colleagues) cannot receive funding, not even for travel.

**NSERC CREATE Expression of Intent (EOI)**

This EOI template is developed based on the information required in NSERC’s LOI. Completing it will assist you in developing the [NSERC Letter of Intent (LOI)](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/onlineservices-servicesenligne/instructions/187/create_eng.asp).

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| **Training program information** |
| **Lead Applicant Name:**  |  |
| **Department/Faculty:**  |  |
| **Proposed Training Program Title:** |  |
| **CREATE stream:** | [ ]  Regular  | [ ]  Int’l (DFG) | [ ]  TBD |

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| **Training program scope**  |
| **Will the program include industry or academic partners?** | [ ]  Industry | [ ]  Academic | [ ]  Neither |
| **Is any assistance required to identify industry partners?** | [ ]  Yes | [ ]  No | [ ]  Unsure |

| **Co-applicants** (minimum of one and maximum of ten names) |
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| At least 70% of co-applicants must be from NSE fields. The remaining 30% can be from other fields. Equity, diversity, and inclusion considerations should be reflected in the rationale of the team composition and in the designated roles within the team.  |
| **Name** (family, given) | **Est. research/activity****time** (hrs/mo.) | **Organization and Faculty/Department** | **Field** (NSERC / SSHRC / CIHR) |
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| **Partnering organizations (industry and/or academic)** – For the regular stream, a list of **collaborators** is not required at the LOI stage but can be included if they are already known. Add rows if necessary |
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| **Organization (country)** | **Status** |
|  | [ ]  Confirmed | [ ]  TBD |
|  | [ ]  Confirmed | [ ]  TBD |

| **Outline of the Training Program**  | **2 pages max** |
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| * State the objectives of the research training program, both short- and long-term. (Address the type of research in which trainees will be involved.)
* Summarize the approach, originality and novelty, as well as the expected significance of the proposed program (e.g. unique and interdisciplinary approaches, professional skills which will complement technical skills).
* Explain how the proposed approach, including the role of mentoring, will better prepare trainees for future careers in industry, government, not-for-profit or, to a lesser extent, academia.
	+ How will stakeholders (e.g. future employers) be involved in the training program?
	+ Describe potential employers and job prospects for the trainees.
* Discuss how the program will improve student mobility (e.g. with potential workplaces, between universities).
* Provide estimates for the number of students and postdoctoral fellows that will participate in the program annually (focus on MSc and PhD; programs can also benefit PDF and undergrads):

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | # in Year 1 | # in Year 2 | # in Year 3 | # in Year 4 | # in Year 5 | # in Year 6 | Total |
| Undergrad |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Master’s |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| PhD |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| PDF |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

* How has the program been designed to increase the inclusion and advancement of equity-deserving groups? (How are EDI considerations reflected in trainee recruitment plans, and in team composition and mentoring plans?)
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| **Program deliverables** – Using the table below, summarize the deliverables of the training program in the 3 core areas of technical training, trainee mobility and professional skills training and mentoring. |
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| Program content deliverable | List of curriculum elements with brief description | Mandatory for all trainees? (Y/N) | If not mandatory, describe to whom it applies and/or describe the program options |
| Technical training (courses, workshops, seminars, summer school, etc.) |  |  |  |
| Trainee mobility (internships, exchanges, etc.)  |  |  |  |
| Professional skills training and mentoring (courses, workshops, seminars, summer school, etc.) |  |  |  |

| **Excellence of the Proposed Team of Researchers**  | **2 pages max** |
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* Provide information on the core team involved. Explain the rationale for the team composition and how the team has the necessary expertise and diversity to successfully execute the training program.
* Describe if and how the members of the team will work together (i.e. collaborative research).
* Explain the roles and responsibilities of the team members within the training program and its management.
* Describe how EDI considerations are reflected in the rationale of the team compositions and the designated roles within the team.
* Describe how policies/practices to support EDI within the team have been/will be implemented (e.g. recruitment of team members, management of the team, mentorship).
* Discuss the quality and extent of the research team’s past contributions to the training and mentoring of HQP.
* Describe specific actions implemented by team members to support EDI in the recruitment/mentorship of trainees and ensure an inclusive research and training environment and trainee growth.

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| **Alignment**  | **½ page max** |

* Consider emerging training priorities within the university, the discipline(s), and demand for (particularly graduate) trainees in the target area(s). How does this program align with and support these priorities and needs? This speaks to NSERC’s requirement that CREATE programs fill a clear training gap, as well as to institutional alignment and the long-term sustainability of the training program.
	+ Which of the University of Lethbridge’s strategic research area(s) does the program align with, and how does it support this/these area(s)?

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| **Support for the Program**  | **½ page max** |

* Outline support (from departments, faculties, institutions, industry, and any partner organizations) required to successfully implement the proposed program. Support may include, but is not limited to, cash or in-kind support, teaching release, infrastructure and new space and/or renovations for personnel and equipment, internships, etc. Please comment on plans to secure this support.

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| **Preliminary Budget** | **1 page max** |

* No budget is required for the LOI, but it has to include a table with an estimate of the number of trainees that will participate in the program. To figure out how many students you will be able to support, create a preliminary budget.
* Note the following:
1. Requested amounts per year can vary from $150,000 (± $50,000) in the first year and $300,000 (± $50,000) annually for up to five subsequent years, as long as it does not exceed $1.65 million over six years.
2. The coordinator's salary can be funded or co-funded by NSERC.

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| **Ongoing and/or Previously Funded CREATE Initiatives (if applicable)** | **½ page max** |

* Explain the role of participants in an ongoing or previously funded CREATE initiative relative to the new CREATE. Describe how the two initiatives differ from one another.
* Describe how this proposal differs from other active CREATEs in the same research area.

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|  **Resubmission of Previously Submitted Proposal to NSERC (if applicable)** | **1 page max** |

* If the program being proposed has previously been submitted to NSERC (at either the Letter of Intent or the Full Application stage), please comment on the reviewer feedback and describe how it will be addressed. What will support the program’s success this time?

**Note:** please attach a copy of the NSERC feedback to this proposal.

1. “*The division between NSE and non-NSE researchers is based on their area of study and not on where the research is conducted nor on the educational background of the researcher. An NSE researcher works and publishes in journals that cater to the areas of research that are NSERC eligible*”. Please see [here](http://www.science.gc.ca/eic/site/063.nsf/eng/h_FEE7261A.html?OpenDocument) for more information [↑](#footnote-ref-1)